

# NEWS RELEASE



a division of the  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

---

PUBLIC INFORMATION SECTION, P.O. Box 1368, Jefferson City, MO 65102

---

Colonel Jerry E. Adams, Commissioner

***For further information contact:***

Sergeant Paul E. Kennedy, Director  
Public Information & Safety Education  
Phone: (573)-751-3333  
Fax: (573)-522-1287  
E-mail: [paul.kennedy@mswp.dps.mo.gov](mailto:paul.kennedy@mswp.dps.mo.gov)  
Number of Pages: 2

***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Jefferson City, Missouri***

Colonel Jerry Adams, Commissioner, encourages boaters to plan for a safe day on the water this Summer. Recreational boating casualties have become the second leading cause of transportation related fatalities after highways. On average, over 700 people die in boating-related accidents each year with a growing percentage of these being children. Nearly nine out of ten victims who drown were not wearing a life jacket. Eight out of ten boating fatalities occur on boats where the operator had no boating safety education. The trend is obvious. Typically the victims of boating accidents are not the safety conscious, educated boaters. The Missouri State Water Patrol encourages all boaters to refresh their boating knowledge by reading the Handbook of Missouri Boating Laws and Responsibilities available online and at your local Department of Revenue office. Also, a new law beginning in January 2005 mandates that operators of vessels on the lakes of the state born after January 1, 1984, must take a boating safety education course that is approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA). In 2003, Missouri boaters were involved in 321 boating accidents. Through education and knowledge we hope to reduce those numbers.

Spend some time now on your boat and you can make the rest of the boating season safer and more enjoyable. We recommend that boaters check the following before their first outing of the season:

- Make sure you have an approved life jacket on board and in good condition for each passenger.
- Inspect the hull for cracks or blisters.
- Inspect bilge plug fittings and replace any that have cracked. Look for hoses that have been forced off or split from freezing. Every spring, boats sink at the dock when these problems go undetected until the first heavy rain.
- Thru-hull fittings below the water line should be tight; sea valves should operate freely.
- Inspect fuel fittings and hoses; replace if cracked or showing other signs of stress or age.
- Get fresh batteries for portable electronic gear – radios, GPS, flashlights.
- Check lights on the boat and trailer. Inspect trailer tires for wear and inflate properly. Check the trailer frame for rust spots; inspect the wheel bearings and re-pack if necessary. Test the winch.
- Check expiration dates on flares and fire extinguishers; replenish the first-aid kit.
- Creamy brown or gray engine or drive oil has water in it and a mechanic should find the source of the leak before you start the engine.
- Inspect dock and anchor lines for wear and replace if needed.

- Update your navigational chart inventory. Channel markers and buoys change.
- Review your boat insurance policy and update coverage if necessary.

Recently, there have been several incidents statewide on public waters that involved altercations between dock owners and boaters, specifically fisherman. A few dock owners erroneously believe they own the public waters around their docks. In fact, they do not. Boaters legally engaged in fishing have the right to fish near docks or in coves that have marinas. Conversely, fisherman should not tie up to docks, get on docks, cast into the wells of docks or allow their lures to strike any part of the dock or boats in the dock. Anyone who threatens to harm, shoots at or throws objects at boaters will be subject to arrest and prosecution under the appropriate law.

Watch the Missouri State Water Patrol homepage at [www.mswp.dps.mo.gov](http://www.mswp.dps.mo.gov) for updates on Boating Safety Courses in your area.